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## HISTORIC WASHINGTON HOMES.\*

By MR. HAL H. SMITH.

(Read before the Society, December 10, 1907.)

Washington is not only a city of historic homes, but of many of them. Literally, hundreds of these interesting dwellings have been intimately associated with famous men and women of American history.

They are to be found along almost every street and avenue of the national capital. Their story is quite inseparable from the lives of notables in the fascinating procession that has passed through the portals of Washington during the interval of scarcely more than the century which has elapsed since the seat of government was transferred in 1800 from the City of Brotherly Love to the banks of the Potomac, and, these wonderfully interesting figures in the march of events have included presidents, statesmen, diplomats, military leaders and fine ladies and gentlemen of the old school.

Behind the walls of many of these stately, old structures innumerable problems of statecraft have been solved, final compromises have been reached, measures of administration and legislation conceived, treaties signed and even conspiracies hatched. These temporary abodes, the caravansera of man in the making of a great modern nation, have had their brilliant levees

\* This very interesting paper, at the request of the Committee on Communications, was prepared and read before the Society by Mr. Smith on short notice, and the facts were obtained by him from papers and manuscript in his possession as well as from numerous volumes relating to the City of Washington, which he consulted.—*Committee on Publication.*

and social functions, their entrancing romances and striking sorrows, their courtships, weddings of pomp or simplicity, and the many impressive moments marking the spiritual exit of dying statesmen. The occupants of these houses have, in fact, played their rôles in some of the finest comedies as well as in a number of the most sorrowful tragedies of American national life.

So very numerous are these historic structures and such is their interest, that, it is perhaps difficult to ascertain where one should begin or end an account of them. All are interesting. None are more so than the group of dwellings facing Lafayette Square. Beginning with the White House and circling that entire rectangle of green is a series of mansions probably more historic than any other single group in the entire country. It was in domiciles on this square that Sumner died, that "Dolly" Madison "held court" and that brave Commodore Stephen Decatur lived, up to the fatal morning that took him out to the old duelling grounds at Bladensburg for the final "affair of the code" with Commodore James Barron.

Diagonally across the street from the White House stands a red-brick structure which was for many years the home of Senator Charles Sumner. It is at the northwest corner of Vermont Avenue and H Street. Senator Pomeroy lived next door. Cleveland went from a suite of rooms in the Pomeroy House to his first inauguration. The Sumner House has, during recent months, been occupied by the Metropolitan Club while that organization has been having its new clubhouse erected. Walter Q. Gresham, former Secretary of State, and Postmaster General Henry C. Payne died in the Sumner House.

Immediately west of the house in which Sumner died

and adjoining St. John's Church, on the east, is the great double house, the walls of which are veneered with stucco, painted with remarkably close resemblance to brown-stone. The house was built by Matthew St. Clair Clarke, who was from 1822 to 1834 the Clerk of the House of Representatives. When Lord Alexander Baring Ashburton was sent to the United States in 1842 by Sir Robert Peel to take up the unsettled condition of the Northeastern Boundary question, it was this house which became his residence. Much of the negotiation between the representatives of the two governments, which led to the final agreement between them, was conducted there and it may be that the treaty itself was signed there. The treaty fixed the northeastern boundary between the United States and the British dominions in that portion of the North American continent.

Daniel Webster was then Secretary of State, and, as a token of the pleasant relations between the two statesmen, Webster named one of his sons for Lord Ashburton. For his part in the treaty achievement Lord Ashburton was accorded, in both Houses of Parliament, a complimentary vote of thanks, and an earldom was offered him, which he, however, declined. The Ashburton House was occupied by John Nelson of Maryland who became President Tyler's Attorney-General in 1843. This dignified, square-shaped structure once sheltered the British Legation, while Lord Dalling, better known as Sir Henry Lytton Bulwer, was envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary to the United States, and, in its beautiful garden, his not less famous nephew and secretary, Edward Robert Bulwer Lytton, better known as "Owen Meredith," later the Earl of Lytton, is reputed to have written his celebrated poem of "Lucile."

A famous neighboring land-mark is St. John's Church at the northeast corner of 16th and H Streets, which in one respect is like its not less famous companion, the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church which has become known as the "Church of the Presidents." St. John's was built in the early part of the second decade of the nineteenth century with the earnest encouragement of President Madison and was long known as the "Court Church." Some of the Presidents worshipped there. Others were only attendants, but from Madison to Buchanan, practically all of the Presidents visited St. John's. The historic claims of the New York Avenue congregation are older, since it was established in 1803 and has had among its worshippers from the White House John Quincy Adams, Andrew Jackson, William Henry Harrison, Franklin Pierce, James Buchanan, Abraham Lincoln, Andrew Johnson, and, before his Presidency, Benjamin Harrison.

But, the part of Washington's religious edifices in the making of the nation would make another interesting chronicle. The mansion, more modern than most of its neighbors, at the northwest corner of 16th and H Streets, opposite St. John's Church, was the home of the late Secretary of State John Hay, and adjoining it on the north side of H Street is the home of Henry Adams, historian, grandson of John Quincy Adams and son of the first Charles Francis Adams whom he accompanied as private secretary when the latter was American Minister to England in the sixties.

In the next house, at 1607 H Street, northwest, now used as a young ladies' seminary, lived John Slidell, when he was a member of the Senate, which he entered in 1853, leaving in 1861 to support the cause of the Confederacy. In the fall of that year he was sent to

France as a Commissioner from the Southern States but was destined to be captured by a United States cruiser under command of Captain John Wilkes. In the same year that Slidell gave up this mansion it was taken over as the home of Gideon Welles, a Connecticut editor who came to Washington to serve as a bureau chief in the Navy Department but was soon called by President Lincoln into his Cabinet as Secretary of the Navy. Welles served in the Cabinet until 1869 and while so occupied he lived in the Slidell mansion. It was later occupied by two Secretaries of War—Daniel S. Lamont in the nineties and Russell A. Alger during the Spanish-American War.

Immediately adjoining Slidell House on the west is the famous Corcoran House about which a volume might be written. It was built by the father of former Governor Swann of Maryland and is surrounded almost by a spacious garden in which there are trees which blossom so fragrantly every spring as to scent the entire neighborhood. During the height of his fame friends of Daniel Webster presented this mansion to him. He resided there while serving as Secretary of State under Harrison and Tyler just before the opening of the Mexican War. When he left the "Tippecanoe Cabinet" Webster decided he could no longer support such an expensive establishment. It was then bought by the late W. W. Corcoran, the banker-philanthropist founder of the Corcoran Gallery, and has since then been known as Corcoran House. Because of Mr. Corcoran's strong Southern sympathies, the Federal Government nearly confiscated the mansion. The great banker anticipated this, however, by leasing the dwelling to the French Minister, the Marquis de Montholon, in 1865, near the end of the Civil War. Thus this structure held French State secrets during the Civil

War just as it had sheltered those of the British Legation in the regime of Minister Richard Pakenham during the Mexican War.

While Corcoran House was in use by the French Legation, it witnessed numerous magnificent social events and the dispensation of gorgeous hospitality. One of its crowning entertainments of this character was a brilliant ball given by order of Louis Napoleon while General Grant was stationed in Washington, toward the end of the war, as commander-in-chief of the Federal Army, and a French warship which had been lying at Annapolis was ordered here so that its officers might show honor to the general.

At this ball the Marquis de Montholon was fairly resplendent in an elaborate Parisian court-dress embroidered with jeweled fleur-de-lis. Sir Frederick W. A. Bruce, the British Minister, led the cotillion and the occasion was marked by the presence of two brides—Mrs. Kate Chase Sprague, daughter of Salmon P. Chase, and Mrs. General Williams, daughter of Madison Cutts, Sr., and widow of Stephen A. Douglas. After the war ended, Mr. Corcoran returned to the house and remained there until his death in February, 1888. The place was subsequently occupied by Senator Calvin S. Brice of Ohio during the nineties and he is said to have paid \$5,000 to the late Anton Seidl for one splendid evening of music in the great ball room of the house.

On the other side of Connecticut Avenue, at the northwest corner of its intersection with H Street, is the house which was for years the residence of Rear Admiral William B. Shubrick, a distinguished officer of the American Navy who had served with distinction as a lieutenant on board the "Constitution" in one of its famous sea actions. He came here in 1860 to head the

Light House Board, and after ten years' service in that capacity, died in the Shubrick House in May, 1874. The two old-fashioned and stately houses on the north side of H Street, immediately west of Shubrick House, were the homes, respectively, of Judge Bancroft Davis, diplomat, and George Bancroft, historian, the latter having resided for years and having finally died at what is now numbered 1623 H Street.

Diagonally opposite is the old Decatur House, at the southwest corner of Jackson Place and H Street, now designated as 28 Jackson Place. It was built by Commodore Stephen Decatur, a great naval hero, out of prize money received by him from gallant captures of British vessels during the War of 1812, and was the first private dwelling erected on Lafayette Square after that section had fallen under the torch of the British troops who burned the White House in August, 1814. After Decatur's exploits made him famous, he was designated as a Navy Commissioner in 1814, and, took up his residence on Kalorama Heights, in the fine old mansion of "Kalorama" which was built by Joel Barlow. Decatur's wife was the beautiful Miss Wheeler of Virginia, whose hand had been sought by Jerome Bonaparte before that royal exile had met Miss Elizabeth Patterson of Baltimore. There was a gathering, in March 1820, in the Decatur House when David Porter of the Navy, afterwards Admiral, asked Decatur about that "little party" of next week. It is needless to say Porter referred to the "duel" of March 22, 1820.

Early that morning Commodore Decatur slipped quietly out of his house, went across the square to Beale's Tavern, breakfasted with his seconds, and hurried off to Bladensburg. There followed the duel with Commodore James Barron, whose restoration into



the Navy had been vigorously opposed by Decatur. At the first flash from the duelling irons both Decatur and Barron fell. The former was fatally, the latter only severely, wounded. Decatur was brought to this Lafayette Square house, and soon died there. His remains were taken from the house on "the Square" to "Kalorama" (then really a country mansion, although its site is now well within the limits of the growing modern capital) to be deposited in Joel Barlow's big vault. Decatur's remains rested there until they were removed to Philadelphia in 1846. His funeral from the Decatur House on Lafayette Square was attended by all of the public functionaries in Washington, both American and foreign, with Commodores Tingey, Rodgers, Macdonough and Porter, and Captain Chauncey—for whom the Navy has named five of its most modern torpedo boats—officiating as pall-bearers.

Later in its career Decatur House was occupied by Baron de Tuvill, who came to this country in 1823, and in that year leased the mansion from Mrs. Decatur who did not care to live there after the tragedy of the duel. It was likewise tenanted by Henry Clay when he was Secretary of State in the Cabinet of John Quincy Adams, between 1825 and 1829, and when Clay relinquished it the mansion was procured by his successor, Martin Van Buren, who entered the Cabinet of Jackson in 1829, but resigned in 1831 to become Minister to England. It was next occupied by Edward Livingston, of Louisiana, as Secretary of State from 1831 to 1833, who was one of three distinguished brothers, another of whom was the Chancellor Livingston of New York who administered the oath of office to George Washington. Thus three successive Secretaries of State lived in the old Decatur House, one right after the other, for nearly eight years of the most troublesome days of the Jackson-Adams period.

Decatur House was likewise occupied by a famous senator of the thirties—George M. Dallas of Philadelphia—who in the forties became Vice-President of the United States. Judah P. Benjamin, who afterwards became Secretary of State under the Confederacy, lived in the Decatur House while he was in the Senate in the fifties and besides these notable tenants the structure has housed the British Legation under Sir Charles Vaughan who came here in 1825, after Baron de Tuyll gave up the residence. In more recent years General Edward Fitzgerald Beale was the occupant and owner of the house.

Immediately south of Decatur House stands that of William L. Scott which was used as the "Temporary White House" during the anthracite coal strike of 1902, and, four doors south of it, at 14 Jackson Place, is the Schuyler Colfax or Sickles mansion. Originally built by Dr. Ewell, a naval surgeon, it has been the home of three Secretaries of the Navy—Smith Thompson, Samuel L. Southard and Levi Woodbury, also of Senator Rives of Virginia, Schuyler Colfax and Gen. Daniel E. Sickles, when the latter was a member of the House from New York during the fifties. It has been variously called either the Sickles or the Colfax House.

Around the corner, on the north side of Pennsylvania Avenue—between the building at the corner now used by the Bureau of American Republics and the one on the other corner of Seventeenth occupied by the United States Court of Claims—are two grand old mansions facing the War Department. They are the Blair house at 1651 Pennsylvania Avenue, and its immediate neighbor, the Lee Mansion at 1653 Pennsylvania Avenue. The latter was the residence of the late Rear Admiral Lee; the former the abode of Francis P. Blair and of

Montgomery Blair. This Blair house was built early in the nineteenth century by Surgeon General Joseph Lovell. After his death it was sold to Francis P. Blair, Sr., editor of *The Globe*, the official organ of the Jackson Administration. The Blair house, accordingly, became a favorite rendezvous for Benton, Van Buren, Levi Woodbury, Silas Wright and other political leaders of that day. The house was once leased by George Bancroft, the historian, while he was Secretary of the Navy under President Polk. It was while Bancroft was living there that he gave the order as Acting Secretary of War for General Zachary Taylor to cross the Rio Grande River and invade the territory of Mexico. Not until after his return from service in Europe as American Minister to England, and to Prussia, did Mr. Bancroft reside, around the corner, in the now famous H-street house.

The Blair mansion was next occupied by John Y. Mason of Virginia as Secretary of the Navy under President Tyler, and then by Senator Thomas Ewing of Ohio, who adopted William Tecumseh Sherman in 1829 and secured for him his cadetship at West Point. During the tenancy of Senator Ewing the Blair house was, in 1850, the scene of the wedding of Sherman to Miss Ellen Ewing, the daughter of that promising young officer's patron, Senator Ewing. The ceremony was performed in the spacious drawing room of the residence in the presence of President Fillmore and Cabinet, Daniel Webster and Henry Clay, among others.

The Blair house was inherited by Lincoln's Postmaster General, the late Montgomery Blair from the latter's father, the late Francis P. Blair, and Montgomery Blair lived there during the Civil War. General Robert E. Lee visited both the Blair and the Lee

houses before the outbreak of the Civil War and it was in one of these two mansions that he is understood to have learned of President Lincoln's wish that he, Lee, should accept command of the United States army at the beginning of the war, an offer that was subsequently declined when Lee threw up his federal commission and cast in his lot with the cause of the Confederacy.

Fronting Lafayette Square from the east are the "Dolly" Madison house, now sheltering the Cosmos Club and south of it is the old Tayloe mansion. The Madison house at the southeast corner of the juncture of Vermont Avenue with H Street was erected by Richard Cutts shortly after his brother-in-law, James Madison of Virginia, had come to Washington in 1801 to serve President Jefferson as Secretary of State. Madison lived in that house from about the time of its completion, while he was Secretary of State, until he was elected to the Presidency in 1808. After taking the oath of office in the House of Representatives in March, 1809, Madison returned to this house and was there waited upon by a large concourse of friends including his former Virginia neighbor, Jefferson, the retiring President.

Twenty years afterwards—following the death of her husband in June, 1836, at "Montpelier" in Virginia—Mrs. Madison returned to the Lafayette Square house and there, for more than a decade, she dispensed hospitality as one of the leaders of Washington society until her death in 1849. It was then always part of the New Year's Day etiquette in Washington for social and official leaders of Washington to call first upon the President at the White House and then to stroll across the square to pay one's respects to "Dolly" Madison.

After the death of Mrs. Madison the house was sold

to Captain John Wilkes. By a strange coincidence he was afterwards called upon to take his neighbor Slidell off the British steamer "Trent" on the high seas when the latter was bound for Europe as diplomatic commissioner for the Confederacy, and this incident, in which these two prominent former residents of this same neighborhood of the White House figured, nearly caused war with Great Britain. During the Civil War the "Dolly" Madison house was used as the headquarters of General McClellan and his staff which at that time included the Prince de Joinville and the latter's nephews, the Duke de Chatres and the Count de Paris.

After that the house was used for office purposes by the French Claims Commission and it ultimately passed into the possession of that famous scientific organization, the Cosmos Club. It is one of the very few historic houses in Washington that is marked with a tablet. It is a singular fact that so few of these hundreds of history-making houses have neither tablets nor inscriptions to mark them and this is a work that should engage the serious attention and elicit the hearty support of all public-spirited citizens of the nation's capital. There is a plain stone tablet marking a house on M Street, in Georgetown, connected with incidents in the life of George Washington.

Probably the only other tablet of this character marking the site of any of the hundreds of other noted houses in Washington is the bronze plate upon the wall of the Belasco Theater, on the East side of Madison Place, near Pennsylvania Avenue. That tablet bears this brief inscription:

"On this site Commodore John Rodgers built an elegant house in 1831. In it on April 14, 1865, an attempt was made to assassinate William H. Seward, Secretary of State, by one

of the conspirators who murdered Abraham Lincoln the same night. The Hon. James G. Blaine afterward bought the house and died here."

John Rodgers did not reside long in the house which stood where one now finds the theater. The Rodgers mansion contained more than two dozen large rooms and required large means for its proper maintenance. Rodgers accordingly relinquished the house and it became a fashionable boarding-house. Among its guests at that time were John C. Calhoun, while serving as Jackson's Secretary of War, and Henry Clay part of the time that he was Secretary of State for Adams. From a boarding-house the Rodgers mansion was transformed into the celebrated Washington Club. Daniel E. Sickles and Philip Barton Key were each members of the club which was a rendezvous for statesmen, literatti, and the Beau Brummels of ante-bellum Washington society. Sickles and Key belonged to this club when the tragedy, which has always associated their names, occurred on February 27, 1859, about 100 feet south of the club door.

At the beginning of the Civil War, William H. Seward took over the Rodgers mansion which had ceased to be used for club purposes, and, on the fateful evening of April 14, 1865, when Lincoln was shot at Ford's old theater, Lewis Payne Powell, a Confederate soldier from Florida, visited this house while Seward was lying ill, secured admission as a professed messenger and made his way to Seward's room on the second floor, at the door of which chamber he was met by Frederick Seward, son of the Cabinet officer. The assassin succeeded in inflicting three dagger wounds on the face and neck of the great premier of the war. Powell was captured and hanged with the Surratt conspirators. When the Seward family moved from the house

in 1869, it was taken over by General and Mrs. Belknap and its last distinguished occupant, before its demolition in the nineties for the building of the playhouse, was James G. Blaine who died in the old house on January 27, 1893, shortly after his resignation as Secretary of State under Harrison.

Adjoining the site of the Blaine-Seward-Rodgers house is the famous old Tayloe mansion at 21 Madison Place. It has served in recent years as the home of Vice-President Garrett A. Hobart and of the late Senator Marcus A. Hanna. The Tayloe house was built about 1828 by Benjamin Ogle Tayloe, son of the builder of the Octagon house. Upon his death the property passed into the possession of his widow. Then its fine paintings went to the Corcoran Gallery of Art. Philip Barton Key was related to the Tayloes and it was into the Club House adjoining the Tayloe's, that he was carried to die after he had been shot by Sickles.

One of the last visits ever made by President William Henry Harrison was to the Tayloe mansion in connection with his prospective appointment of a member of that family to be treasurer of the United States. Some years ago the house was sold to Senator Don Cameron of Pennsylvania, who improved it extensively. The late President McKinley frequently breakfasted in this house during its occupancy by Senator Hanna, and the latter matured his plans for the 1900 national campaign within its walls. Between the Tayloe mansion and the "Dolly" Madison house stand two residences in which former Secretary of the Treasury William Windom, the late Col. Robert G. Ingersoll and Senator Fenton lived.

Not far from Lafayette Square, on the west side of Vermont Avenue, between H and I Streets, there could

be seen for many years three princely mansions, one of which was the home of Reverdy Johnson before he went to England to negotiate the treaty of 1868 for the settlement of the Alabama Claims. The second of this trio was occupied by William L. Marcy, as Secretary of War under Polk and Secretary of State under Pierce, and when he retired from the Cabinet he was succeeded in this and in the adjoining house by Lewis Cass, Secretary of State under Buchanan, who had previously been Secretary of War under Jackson.

A still more famous home of the Tayloe family is the old Octagon House at the corner of 18th Street and New York Avenue, so called from its oddity of shape. It was erected in 1798, completed two years later by Colonel John Tayloe and was one of the very finest residences in the entire country. Its building interested General Washington deeply and he frequently visited the site during the erection of the building. Tayloe and Washington were intimate friends and it was upon the latter's advice that the former decided to build a home in Washington. General Washington died before the completion of the Octagon House, but from 1800 until the death of Colonel Tayloe in 1828, the house was famous for its entertainments. Between these years it was visited by Presidents Jefferson, Madison, Monroe and John Quincy Adams, Decatur, Porter, Clay, Calhoun, Randolph, Lafayette, Edward Thornton, who was British charge d'affaires from 1800 to 1803, and many other notables. We had another Thornton as British diplomatic representative to this country in later years—Sir Edward Thornton who was British Minister at Washington from 1868 until 1881. When the executive mansion was burned by the British in 1814 the Madisons went over to the Octagon House and occupied it for some time. During that occupancy



the Treaty of Ghent, which terminated the War of 1812, was signed by Madison. After the inauguration of Monroe as President he was escorted in March, 1817, to the Octagon, the White House not having been restored. For some years the Octagon was vacant, and, after sheltering many minor occupants, it was finally acquired, in 1902, by the American Institute of Architects, prominent members of which regarded the Octagon as one of the finest architectural examples in the country.

Shortly after the departure of the Madisons from the Octagon, another famous house sprang up in the same neighborhood—the Van Ness mansion, built by General John P. Van Ness, of New York, in 1820, on what is now to be the site of the new Carnegie home for the Bureau of American Republics. The Van Ness house is on 17th Street south of the new Continental Hall of the Daughters of the American Revolution and the grounds occupy an entire city square which once included the old cottage of Davy Burnes, the Scotchman, whose only daughter, the beautiful Marcia Burnes, became the wife of General Van Ness. Prior to the erection of this magnificent house—now going to rack and ruin—its builder lived on 11th Street, between C and D Streets. During the period beginning with 1820 the Van Ness Mansion was renowned for its generous hospitality and as a gathering place for Congressmen.

Franklin Square has been another center for the grouping of houses destined to become the homes of famous men of the nation. The large brick structure at the northwest corner of 13th and K Streets was used as the Mexican Legation about the close of the Civil War when Senor Matias Romero was Mexican Minister to the United States. During his occupancy of this house Senor Romero was visited several times by Gen-

eral U. S. Grant. On one such occasion Romero brought to Grant's notice facts about the activity of certain men who had planted themselves at Galveston, Texas, in furtherance of the movement against Juarez, the deposed ruler of Mexico, then struggling for power with the troops of the usurper. The result of this conference between Grant and Romero was the prompt arrest of the Galveston revolutionary coterie by the American authorities.

The third house west of the former Mexican Legation on K Street is the one in which the Treaty of Washington, for the settlement of claims growing out of the depredations of the Confederate cruiser *Alabama* was signed May 8, 1871. This house was used for the meetings of the Joint High Commission which framed the treaty. The personnel of the Commission included Secretary of State Hamilton Fish, Associate Justice Samuel Nelson of the United States Supreme Court, Robert C. Schenck who was American Minister to England, Attorney General Rockwood Hoar, Senator Williams of Oregon, the Earl de Gray, the Earl of Nippon, Sir Stratford Henry Northcote, Sir Edward Thornton who was British Minister to Washington and Sir Edward McDonald of the Privy Council of Canada. The clerks of the commission during its deliberations in this house were Lord Tenterton and J. C. Bancroft Davis.

Viscount Aoki, the Japanese Ambassador, now occupies the large stone-front mansion at 1321 K Street, which was built by former Secretary of State John Sherman, who also lived and died there. When Sherman first came to Washington, he boarded a while at Willard's old hotel. Then he went down by the Capitol to reside in what was an old fashionable portion of Washington. One day he told Mrs. Sherman:

“I have bought a house out on Franklin Square.”

The place he purchased was then surrounded by an old board fence and was “so far out” that Mrs. Sherman felt as though she were going “into the country” to live. Sherman bought several lots on each side of his lot, and, while serving as Secretary of the Treasury, under Hayes, he put up a house on this Franklin Square property. It afterwards became the home of the Chilean Legation. Finally Sherman erected what is now the home of the Japanese Ambassador.

Adjoining the Sherman house on the west is the three-story brick house, in front of which are two large magnolia trees, at 1325 K Street. Lincoln’s great War Secretary—Edwin M. Stanton—lived there in December, 1869, when he was appointed to the Supreme Court by Grant, but died in this house four days later, and never filled the appointment. Next to the Stanton home, on the west, is the former residence of Charles Astor Bristed, a nephew of the great Astor, the first John Jacob Astor. In the forties the north side of K Street, between 12th and 13th was known as “Franklin Row.” In the center of the square were three houses then regarded as elegant. Two of them were used by Col. Truman Cross—one of the first men killed in the Mexican War—and by Commodore A. S. Wadsworth of the Navy. Further east on K Street was “Walker’s Row,” between 8th and 9th Streets. James A. Garfield, during his service in the House of Representatives and before his election to the Presidency, lived at the northeast corner of 13th and I Streets in 1879. The number of his house was then 1227 I Street. In the next block, on the south side of I Street, fronting Franklin Square, is the house in which Constantine Catacasy lived, in 1869, while serving as Russian Minister to the United States.

Walking a block farther west, along I Street, we come to the present Mexican Embassy, at 1415 I Street, which was formerly the home of Chief Justice Morrison R. Waite of the United States Supreme Court. Simon Cameron's home was at the northeast corner of 15th and I Streets and Benjamin F. Butler also lived there before he built the big mansion opposite the United States Capitol. Across the street is the house at the southeast corner of 15th and I Streets, which afterwards became the famous old Chamberlin Club, another former rendezvous of national statesmen and wits. Just below it, at 821 15th Street, northwest, lived James G. Blaine during the Hayes Administration, and, General William Tecumseh Sherman, who was then general commanding the army resided at 817 15th Street. A little below that, but diagonally across the street, where The Shoreham now stands, was the house built by Samuel Harrison Smith of the *National Intelligencer*. It afterwards became the residence of Representative Samuel Hopper of Massachusetts who rented it to General McClellan who used it as his Washington residence and lived there when he was restored by Lincoln to the command of the Army of the Potomac in 1862.

On the opposite corner was Wormley's Hotel, afterwards the Colonial, now razed for a new banking structure. Wormley's was famous for its celebrities. Roscoe Conkling lived there as Senator from New York in 1879. John Hay "stopped" there at the same time while serving as Assistant Secretary of State under Evarts, who then lived opposite McPherson Square at what is now 1507 K Street, which, in later years, became the home of Representative Robert R. Hitt of Illinois. John Sherman lived in that period at 1323 K Street, Don Cameron was then living at 1705 K Street,

Senator Henry L. Dawes was then residing at 1409 K Street and Senator George H. Pendleton was then at 1301 K Street—the house which Minister Romero had previously occupied.

Until last year the former home of Hamilton Fish was to be seen—opposite old John Chamberlain's—at the southwest corner of 15th and I Streets, but it has now been swallowed up within the newer walls of the mansion of Mr. John R. McLean. Still further west on I Street, fronting Farragut Square, is the residence now occupied as the Russian Embassy by Baron Rosen of the Great Empire of the Slavs. This house was formerly the home of Secretary of the Navy, Benjamin F. Tracy, and was the scene of the terrible Tracy fire.

An apartment house, at the northwest corner of 17th and I Streets, supplants the fine old square house which was erected in 1826, by William Williamson, and was afterwards occupied by brave Major-General Alexander McComb. Westward on the same block are other famous houses, including the one at 1713 I Street where Mrs. James Brown Potter first attracted public attention by her recitation of "Osler Joe" in a Washington drawing room; the one at 1736 I Street where Jefferson Davis lived for a while with Mrs. Davis; and also the plain old building at 1739 I Street, on the northeast corner of the intersection of that thoroughfare with 18th Street, where Harriet Lane Johnston, niece of President Buchanan, lived so many years.

Three blocks west of that was the old Franklin Hotel at 21st and I Streets where Lafayette stopped as a guest in 1825. Lafayette had just been on a visit to the home of Jackson at the "Hermitage" and upon the return of the distinguished Frenchman to Washington he celebrated his sixty-eighth birthday with a visit to the White House. Jackson himself once resided at the

old Franklin Hotel. Peggy O'Neal, the daughter of the former proprietor of the hotel, was courted there by former Secretary of War Eaton.

A walk of twenty blocks eastward along I Street brings one to old "Douglas Row," on the north side of I Street, between New Jersey Avenue and Third Street. All three of the houses in this row were built at the same time, about 1858 and 1859, by Henry M. Rice, who had just entered the Senate from Minnesota, Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois and John C. Breckinridge of Kentucky, who was then serving as Vice-President. "Douglas Row" was also styled "Minnesota Row" because Senator Rice came from that state.

Douglas moved into the first of these houses at the northwest corner of Second and I Streets, and it was there that he received notification of his Presidential nomination one Saturday evening in 1860 when the Illinois band, direct from the convention which had been held at Baltimore, naming him against Lincoln, Breckinridge and Bell came over to Washington and serenaded Senator Douglas at this residence. The second, or central, house of this row was built for Breckinridge but he never had occasion to move into it. The excitement connected with the development of the Civil War was at its height and the interior of the Breckinridge house had not yet been plastered or papered. But Senator Rice moved into the third of these houses, at 205 I Street, and occupied it until the actual beginning of the war. Douglas died at Chicago, June 3, 1861, after the inauguration of Lincoln, and all three of the houses in "Douglas Row" were then taken over by the federal government for use as the Douglas Hospital, while on the opposite side of the street stood Stanton Hospital. The easternmost of these houses,

201 I Street, was afterwards occupied by the Papal Legation and the westernmost was for many years the residence of the late Matthew G. Emery, the last Mayor of Washington City.

Until about thirty-five years ago C Street, between John Marshall Place and Third Street was one of the most fashionable residence sections of Washington. Near the Metropolitan and the First Presbyterian Churches were grouped the residences of many of the most prominent local or national families. During the Civil War the old New York Hotel stood on the north side of C Street, between 4½ and 6th Streets, and, it was a favorite stopping place for aristocratic officers like General Blenker and his staff.

John A. Dix, who was notable as Secretary of the Treasury in 1860-1, lived at 456 C Street. Stanton lived two doors west of the Metropolitan Church, while practicing law, and also lived there as Attorney General, under Buchanan, at the end of the latter's administration. Stanton was living there when he defended Daniel E. Sickles but went to live on H Street, just west of 14th, when he became Secretary of War and from the latter place he moved into the house on K Street north of Franklin Square. In the block just east of John Marshall Place, on C Street, are the former homes of Senator Thomas H. Benton and of John C. Fremont who eloped with Miss Jessie Benton, the daughter of his famous neighbor. Benton wrote his abridgment of the Debates of Congress in that mansion and died there. Others living in the same square were James Campbell, Postmaster-General under Pierce in 1853, Francis Scott Key who lived for a while in the same neighborhood and a score of other prominent families.

Daniel Webster—after moving from Corcoran House

on Lafayette Square—lived in the house afterward known as the Webster Law Building, on the north side of D Street, between 5th and 6th Streets. This building was demolished to make way for the eastern wing of the present new police court structure. Webster was residing there when he received the joyful news of the nomination of his dear friend, General Winfield Scott to the Presidency in 1852. There formerly stood at the northwest corner of 6th and C Streets the old Crutchet house where Alexander Stephens, Charles Sumner, General Scott, Abraham Lincoln and other distinguished men of their era dined. A block further north is the solid old house at the northwest corner of 6th and E Streets where Chief Justice Salmon P. Chase lived, and west of that was the home of Caleb Cushing at 609 E Street. Three blocks further westward James Buchanan boarded for a while at 918 E Street, at what was then one of the many Congressional “messes” for which Washington was famous. Buchanan was then a Senator.

Along F Street between 9th and the Treasury—a thoroughfare better known locally as the “Ridge” during the early days of the city—were a number of historic homes. Thomas U. Walter, architect of the Capitol building resided at 614 F Street and Henry Clay lived on F Street between 12th and 13th Streets part of his official life. The old United States bank building stood in that street, and, during the Hayes administration the blocks between 13th and 15th, on F Street, contained the offices of many well-known newspaper correspondents. At the time of his election to the Presidency, John Quincy Adams, who had been Secretary of State under Monroe, lived at 1333 F Street, where the present Adams Building is to be seen. After his inauguration Adams returned from



the Capitol to this F street residence, though he later went to the White House, which had not been completely restored at the time of his inauguration.

This paper gives only a touch-and-go acquaintance with some of the very many historic houses of the nation's capital. The mansions and homes to which reference has been made have been touched only sketchily, and, they really constitute but a very small percentage of the very many famous houses in Washington. And—after all that has been said we have not travelled very far from the heart of the city in the middle days of the nineteenth century. No mention has been made of the wonderful group of very interesting mansions over in Georgetown such as “Tudor Place,” the “Cedars” where the Calhouns lived, the Key mansion, which has been saved by public-spirited citizens from desecration, the Benjamin Stoddert house and the many other famous places in the West End; nor of the scores of homes in what was the old First Ward of Washington along E, F and G Streets and their intersecting thoroughfares in the section west of the State, War and Navy Department building; nor of Pennsylvania Avenue from 17th Street westward to the Rock Creek bridge; nor of the famous houses of that section of South Washington, along or below the Mall, where the elite of Washington resided in the early days of the government; nor of Southeast Washington; nor of Capitol Hill; nor of Carroll Row; nor of the mansion which General Washington built on North Capitol Street; nor of the “mess” where Lincoln lived when he first came to Washington and sought a patent for a collapsible boat for the shallow waters of the Mississippi; nor of the house where the great James McNeil Whistler lived as a government draughtsman long before he went abroad to gain fame as an artist;

nor of the stopping place of Edgar Allan Poe when he came here in connection with his enlistment into the army under the assumed name of Edgar Allan "Perry"; nor of "Edgewood," "Tunlaw" and many, many courtly old mansions around the fringe of the city; nor of the greater ones that have come with the growth and development of Washington. Not only are there hundreds of history-made houses here; but there are also hundreds of houses and scores of hostelries in which history is being made every minute in this national maelstrom of American political, diplomatic and social activity, and, this history is sometimes made so subtly that it will be difficult to identify some of the houses except by reference to the fact that some one or another famous men were their tenants.